

Office of the Secretary, DOT

§ 300.2

DOT employees, and the parties and attorneys appearing before DOT of the highest standards of judicial and professional ethics. The rules of conduct set forth in this part are to be interpreted in light of those standards.

[Docket No. 82, 50 FR 2380, Jan. 16, 1985, as amended at 60 FR 43528, Aug. 22, 1995]

§ 300.2 Prohibited communications.

(a) *Basic requirement.* Except as provided in paragraphs (c), (d) and (e) there shall be no substantive communication in either direction between any concerned DOT employee and any interested person outside DOT, concerning a public proceeding, until after final disposition of the proceeding, other than as provided by Federal statute or published DOT rule or order.

(b) *Definitions.* For purposes of this part:

(1) A “substantive communication” is any written or oral communication relevant to the merits of the proceeding.

(2) The “DOT decisionmaker” is defined in 14 CFR 302.2 and 302.18.

(3) A “concerned DOT employee” is a DOT employee who is or may reasonably be expected to be directly involved in a decision which is subject to a public proceeding.

(4) A “public proceeding” is one of the following:

(i) A hearing proceeding (i.e., proceeding conducted on-the record after notice and opportunity for an oral evidentiary hearing as provided in §§ 302.17– 302.38)

(ii) A rulemaking proceeding involving a hearing as described in paragraph (b)(4)(i) of this section or an exemption proceeding covered by this chapter. (Other rulemaking proceedings are covered by the ex parte communication policies of DOT Order 2100.2.)

(iii) A tariff filing after DOT has ordered an investigation or a complaint has been filed or docketed.

(iv) A proceeding initiated by DOT show-cause order, after the filing in the docket of an identifiable written opposition to the order’s tentative findings.

(v) Any other proceeding initiated by a docket filing, other than a petition for generally applicable rulemaking, after the filing in the docket of an

identifiable written opposition to the initiating document.

(c) *General exceptions.* Paragraph (a) of this section shall not apply to the following:

(1) Informal communications between legal counsel, including discussions about stipulations and other communications considered proper in Federal court proceedings.

(2) Information given to a DOT employee who is participating in a hearing case on behalf of an office that is a party, to another DOT employee who is reviewing that work, or to his or her supervisors within that office.

(3) Communications made in the course of an investigation to determine whether formal enforcement action should be begun.

(4) Settlement discussions and mediation efforts.

(5) Information given at the request of a DOT employee acting upon a specific direction of DOT, in a case other than a hearing proceeding as described in paragraphs (b)(4) (i) and (ii) (a “non-hearing case”), where DOT has decided that emergency conditions exist and this rule would otherwise prevent the obtaining of needed information in a timely manner.

(6) Information given at the request of a DOT employee in a tariff matter after a complaint is filed but before an investigation is ordered.

(7) Nonhearing cases that are to be decided within 30 days after the filing of the initiating document.

(8) Nonhearing cases arising under 49 U.S.C. 41731–42.

(9) In nonhearing cases, communications with other Federal agencies not exempted by paragraph (e) of this section, provided the agencies have not participated as parties in the proceeding by making filings on-the-record.

(10) Information given at the request of a DOT career employee in the course of investigating or clarifying information filed, or pursuant to a waiver granted to an applicant or other interested person, in docketed proceedings involving determinations of fitness and/or U.S. citizenship only, for that portion of the proceeding that precedes the issuance of a show-cause order or

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an order instituting a formal proceeding. Motions for such waivers and any answers shall be filed in the applicable docket in accordance with § 302.11 of the Department's Procedural Regulations (14 CFR 302.11) and served upon all parties to the proceeding.

(d) *Status and expedition requests.* Paragraph (a) of this section shall not apply to oral or written communications asking about the status, or requesting expeditious treatment, of a public proceeding. However, any request for expeditious treatment should be made in accordance with the Rules of Practice, particularly Rule 11, § 302.11 of this chapter.

(e) *National defense and foreign policy.* In nonhearing cases, paragraph (a) of this section shall not apply to communications concerning national defense or foreign policy matters, including international aviation matters. In hearing cases, any communications on those subjects that would be barred by paragraph (a) of this section are permitted if the communicator's position with respect thereto cannot otherwise be fairly presented, but such communications shall not be included as part of the record on which decisions must be made.

(f) *Communications not considered.* A communication in violation of this section shall not be considered part of a record, or included as available material, for decision in any proceeding.

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§ 300.3 Reporting of communications.

(a) *General.* The following types of substantive communication shall be reported as specified in paragraph (b) of this section:

(1) Any communication in violation of § 300.2(a) of this chapter.

(2) Information given upon determination of an emergency under § 300.2(c)(5) of this chapter.

(3) Information given at the request of a DOT employee in a tariff matter under § 300.2(c)(6) of this chapter.

(4) Communications in nonhearing cases to be decided within 30 days under § 300.2(c)(7) of this chapter.

(5) Communications in nonhearing cases arising under 49 U.S.C. 41731–42, made under § 300.2(c)(8).

(b) *Public filing.* (1) A written communication shall be put into the correspondence or other appropriate file of the proceeding, which shall be available for inspection and copying during business hours in the Documentary Services Division.

(2) An oral communication shall be summarized by the DOT employee receiving it. One copy shall be put into a public file as described in paragraph (b) (1) of this section, and another copy shall be mailed to the communicator.

(3) In addition, copies of written communications and oral summaries shall be filed in chronological order in a “part 300” file maintained in the Documentary Services Division.

(4) Copies of all filings under this part dealing with discontinuances or reductions of air transportation shall be mailed to the directly affected local communities, State agencies, and airport managers.

(c) *Status and expedition requests.* A DOT decisionmaker who receives a communication asking about the status or requesting expeditious treatment of a public proceeding, other than a communication concerning national defense or foreign policy (including international aviation), shall either:

(1) Refer the communicator to the Documentary Services Division.

(2) If the DOT decisionmaker responds by advising on the status, put a memorandum describing the exchange in the public file as described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

[Docket No. 82, 50 FR 2380, Jan. 16, 1985, as amended at 60 FR 43528, Aug. 22, 1995]

§ 300.4 Separation of functions in hearing cases.

(a) This section applies after the initiation of a hearing or enforcement case by the Department.

(b) A DOT employee who is participating in a hearing case on behalf of an office that is a party, another DOT employee who is in fact reviewing the position taken, or who has participated in developing the position taken in that case, or, in cases involving accusatory or disciplinary issues (including all enforcement cases) such employees'